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ABSTRACT

This report discusses the ability of public libraries to address the problems of older Americans, particularly older women, and to make their lives more satisfying. A review of facts and figures about the older population is followed by a discussion of programs and responses to the needs of older Americans by libraries and other agencies, such as Books for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, services to the homebound, and information and referral services. A historical look at library services for the elderly is provided, characteristics of such services are described, and suggestions for program development and improvement are given. Several library programs for the elderly are described, classified by the geographic location of the library system which provides support. The next section on perceptions of aging reviews research, studies, and opinions which confirm the lack of a typical old age or reaction to aging. The final section discusses recommendations for libraries and lists 10 areas that should be considered in developing new library programs and activities for the older population. (NRB)

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L I B R A R I E S:

AIDS TO LIFE SATISFACTION FOR OLDER WOMEN

A 1981 White House Conference on the Aging

Background Paper

by

Virginia Mathews
September 1981

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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INTRODUCTION

This paper affirms that libraries are uniquely equipped to be one of the agencies that can play a major role in addressing the problems and providing outlets and options for older Americans that will make their long lives satisfying. Libraries can help directly, and through other agencies, with coping in such areas as housing, employment, transportation, health and even safety, but they can also be instruments of opportunity for self-fulfillment, discovery, involvement, creativity and influence.

A close examination of our rapidly aging society and of the individuals who make it up reveals several insistent and recurring themes. The first of these is that the myths about aging and the aged have created deeply engrained and harmful attitudes in the society generally toward older people, and that these have been so thoroughly sold that the older people themselves believe them.

The second recurring theme is that the problems of aging -- and problems certainly do exist -- are mostly the problems of women, who are far more likely than men to live into old age, and to succumb to the "leftover life" syndrome which is the legacy of their traditional female roles. Martha Keys, a former Congresswoman and Special Advisor to the Secretary of Health and Human Services had this to say in a recent article:

> Ageism and sexism in our society have combined to create a unique set of circumstances for older women that are only beginning to be

> recognized and explored. Older women represent one of the most vulnerable segments of our society -- they are most likely to live alone, have a lower income, lack transportation, be isolated, be unfamiliar with English (if foreign born) and be subject to diseases such as diabetes, arthritis, osteoporosis or hypertension. (Generations)

And Dr. Robert Butler of the National Institute on Aging is quoted by Keys as saying that "the problems of aging are so much the problems of women" that this could be called "the century of older women."

But this will change. One perceives that the women's movement will benefit the lives of the aging women of the future, those who are now in middle age. It is ironic, however, that the temporary effect of the feminist movement on today's older woman may be negative. To the extent that feminism rewards women for nontraditional activity, it may call into question the value of the traditional lives led by most of the women who are now old. (Waters and White)

The third theme concerns the great truth that older people are not all the same any more than are the people of any other age groups. "Old people," says Jack Ossofsky, Executive Director of the National Council on Aging, "are usually what they were when they were younger, only more so." He counsels that we must learn to separate in our thinking the older people with problems from the vast majority whose adjustment and coping skills are positive and normal, and who report a high level of contentment with retirement and older age. (Gross) As one woman says happily, "We are all as different as snowflakes, molded by the variety of life experiences we have lived through." (Generations)

Finally, one sees clearly that there are tremendous differences between members of one subgroup and another among those we classify as aging: those of the "young-old" of 60-75, and those of the "old-old" of 75 years and upward; between the widow who has been home and family oriented, the displaced homemaker, and the career and professional woman; between the minority aged and the white; and above all between those with enough money and those without it, those with higher levels of education and those without it, and those with health and mobility and those without them.

The test of our civilization, the late gerontologist Donald Kent believed, is not merely to be able to live, but to live fully. "Unless society provides the opportunity to make the later years meaningful," he said, aging and long life is "a cruel hoax on millions of people." The paper which quotes him comments:

> This includes prolonging life and the capacity for useful activity while denying older people outlets for creative and productive capacities; increasing the span of years while failing to provide services which address adequately the problems of the later years; and making survival possible at the cost of loneliness, bordeom and loss of self-esteem. (National Council on Aging's Policy Study Center on Education, Leisure and Continuing Opportunities for Older Persons)

The Center's mandate is to try "to assist society and its institutions to perceive old age as a time for pursuing learning experiences and for developing new interests and skills or re-awakening those left dormant; and to perceive the need to design new strategies for re-engaging older persons in community life." (NCOA)

The National Aging Policy Study Center's background paper continues:

> Concerns voiced by older people in the areas of leisure, education and opportunities for service and fulfillment are not generally seen as approaching the magnitude of the urgency of the problems confronting the elderly in the areas of health, housing, transportation, income and the like. Yet problems in these latter areas are closely related to concerns about education, leisure, volunteering, civic involvement and a host of related areas. Because these matters are not often addressed by public policy or legislative debate, their effect on large numbers of the elderly is too frequently underestimated....

While the other five policy centers that have been set up address the problems of older people, this Center will focus on:

> opportunities, options and directions for life enhancement. This Center, unlike the others, has the unique role of helping to promote a view of aging as a positive phenomenon and a field of human growth and development throughout the lifespan...Without minimizing the genuine problems faced by older people, we see an emphasis on cross-cutting issues with an effort at disclosing hidden strengths, positive attributes, and opportunities for continuing participation. If 'aging' becomes synonymous with 'problems' and dependency alone, then the battle is lost before it has begun.

Quoting the Administration on Aging guidelines that shaped the National Aging Policy Centers Program, the background paper says that the Education, Leisure and Continuing Opportunities Center

> ...would be expected to coordinate its activities with existing programs which serve some of these purposes, including the use of senior centers as learning centers, the community-school program in the U.S. Department of Education, volunteer programs in ACTION and projects supported by the National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities.

Libraries, though not specifically mentioned here, are surely to be assumed to be a vital link in this network, and we herewith place them boldly among the front-line agencies which can do the most to facilitate and sustain both the survival and the life satisfaction needs of all older Americans, and most especially those who are women.

THE OLDER POPULATION: SOME FACTS AND FIGURES

The tide of aging is coming in very fast indeed. Readings from the years 1977-78 talked of 22.3 millions in the population over 65; the newest figures show that at the beginning of 1981 the more than 25,000,000 older Americans made up over 11% of the total U.S. population. This figure, like all of the others in this chapter -- unless specifically cited -- comes from Herman B. Brotman, consultant to the Special Committee on Aging of the United States Senate, and Former Assistant Commissioner on Aging in HEW. Other figures and information come from the publication in which his work is found, Developments in Aging: 1980, A Report of the Special Committee on Aging of the U.S. Senate, presented by John Heinz, Chairman.

Every ninth American at present is over 65 years of age. Regard this in comparison with the 4% (3.1 million) of the then 76 million total population of the U.S. at the beginning of this century. Since 1900 the average life expectancy of Americans has increased by more than 25 years. By the year 2000, only some 18 years away, 31.8 million Americans, or 12.2% of the population of the country (based on a total population projection of 260.4 million) will be over 65.

This rapid growth in the number and therefore the power of older people has significant political, economic and social implications, and many of the issues involved will demand resolution in the decade of the 80s. Politically,

the power potential of the over 65's themselves will be increasingly reinforced by those in the younger population who come to realize that "being old is one minority status we can all expect to enter. To understand aging and to struggle for decent aging is to invest in one's own future." (Gross, Gross and Seidman)

Almost a quarter of the nation's older people live in just three states: California, New York and Texas. Five more states added -- Pennsylvania, Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, and Florida -- brings to a total of eight the states where almost half of the population over 65 lives. States experiencing the most rapid growth in aging population were Arizona, Florida and Nevada.

The aging population is not a homogeneous group nor is it static. Every day approximately 5,000 Americans celebrate their 65th birthday, while every day approximately 3,400 persons over 65 die, for a net increase of 1,600 a day or 600,000 a year. The newcomers, however, have experienced quite a different life history from those already in the over 65 group, and are worlds apart from the older aged who were born in the 19th century. As of mid-1980, 62.2% of the older population were under 75, and more than half of these (34.9%) were under 70.

One of the chief sources of satisfaction with life is sufficient income to live comfortably. Conversely, many of the most severe problems are created by lack of enough money. Older families in 1979 had about half the income of their

younger counterparts. About half of the 5.8 million families headed by an older person have an income of less than $11,316, as compared with the $21,201 enjoyed by 49.6 million families with heads under 65 (figures skewed somewhat by the fact that some 20% of the older families had a higher income in 1979 than the median for the younger families). The 7.9% of the older families whose heads are fully employed had double the median income for all older families, or $22,852. This fact underscores the critical importance of earnings for older families.

The 1979 median income for the 7.7 million unrelated individuals who lived alone or with non-relatives was $4,653 or $89 per week. Some 3.6 million of the over 65 persons were living in poverty, however, with $4,364 a year or less for a single. Women and minority elderly are heavily over-represented among the aged poor, according to 1979 census data, with 17.9% of all females (minority and white) living in official poverty. "Since there is a large gap between the salaries of women and men, women's earnings averaged only 60% of men's." (Burton)

Health probably follows income as the prime concern of those over 65. In a recent household survey of a sample of non-institutionalized elderly, over two-thirds (69%) of the older persons reported their health as good or excellent as compared with "others of their age." (This follows the pattern of responses in other areas which shows that older Americans accept the overall "image" of sickness and other "old problems" but consider themselves exceptions to the rule.)

Some 22% reported that their health was "fair" and only 9% as being "poor." Minority group members, residents of the South and non-metropolitan areas, as well as persons with low incomes, were more likely to report themselves as being in poor health than others.

In 1979 (based upon the new ninth Revision of the International Classification of Diseases) the most frequently reported chronic conditions of the non-institutionalized elderly were arthritis (44%), hypertension (39%), hearing impairment and arteriosclerosis with about 12% each. Almost half (46%) of the respondents said they had some limitation on their usual activity because of the chronic condition, but only 17% reported being unable to perform their "usual" activity at all.

Of the 1.1 million older people who are in nursing homes, at the time of a 1977 study, 41% were aged 75-80, while 40% were 85 plus. Seventy-four percent of the nursing home population was female, and 93% was white. White women were less likely to remain with families or other caretakers in the community than were minority women. The oldest portion of the "old-old" (85 plus) population is more apt to need help with such daily functions as bathing, dressing and getting around the house, but the percentage for the older population as a whole is small: 3.8, 2.6 and 2.6 for each respective function.

Life expectancy (average remaining years for life) reached new heights in the U.S. The 77.2 years for females was 7.7% longer than the 69.5 years for males. Since the 1950s life expactancy for the upper ages has improved as

death rates from chronic conditions and diseases began to decrease.

Most older persons are women. In mid-1980 there were 14.8 million women to 10 million men. In the total 65 plus population there were 147 women to every 100 men. For the 75 and over population, the ratio rises to 178 women to every 100 men, and by 85 plus, there are 224 women for every 100 men. Population projections show that by the year 2000, the number of 85 plus persons will double, while the ratio of women to men for the total over 65 population will rise to 150 to 100.

Seventy-seven percent of the men in the 65 and over population are married, while 52% of the women are widows (rising to 70% widowed over age 75). About 35% of the married 65 plus men are married to younger women. In 1978, the marriage rate for over 65 men was almost seven times that of the older brides.

According to 1979 figures, eight out of every 10 men live in family settings, while less than six of every 10 women did so. The others live alone or with non-relatives, except for the one in 20 who lives in an institution. Four of every 10 older women lived alone, more than three times as many alone or with non-relatives as did the older men.

There are more older than younger people living in rural areas, although 63% of those who are non institutionalized do live in metropolitan areas. The white aged population lives mostly in the suburbs and in rural areas, while better than three quarters of the older blacks live in the central cities.

In 1979 about half of all older Americans had less than a 10th grade education, and about 9% were functionally illiterate. Some 37% had graduated from high school, while 8% were college graduates. Since the median for the present 25-64 age group was high school graduation, the level of education among the elderly is increasing significantly, the median having increased by more than a year since 1970. By 1990, half of the 65 plus population will have graduated from high school.

In the area of political significance and voting influence, the over-65 population made up 15% of the voting age group, but cast 16.8% of the vote in the 1980 Presidential election. The American Association of Retired Persons-National Retired Teachers Association has quintupled its membership since 1970 to a high of over 12.5 million members (who may join at 55). (Allen) Veterans groups are an increasingly large proportion of the older male population, and will constitute 60% of it within the next ten years. (Generations)

There is a great deal of evidence, which mounts as inflation grows worse, that many older citizens would like to continue to work, at least part-time. Senate hearings in the spring of 1980 heard testimony from both workers and corporations to the effect that continuing to work longer may have psychological as well as economic values for the worker, and benefits for the employer as well. "The older person who desires to work and find a suitable job has a much more positive feeling about himself and a stronger sense of

contribution...Employers consistently remarked that their older employees were among their most loyal and productive workers," because, apparently, "a self-selection process has evolved in which the less healthy and less motivated employees were typically the first to want to retire, and the competent, motivated ones often choose to stay on." (Developments in Aging: 1980, Part I)

A major conclusion to emerge from these hearings is that "older workers are the victims of myths and stereotypes." Dr. K. Warner Schaie, Director of the Research Center of the Andrus Gerontology Center at the University of Southern California, reported results from his 21-year-long longitudinal study of age changes in competence and learning ability, from which he concludes that "there is no evidence of systematic, across-the-board poor health, higher accident rates, lower productivity, reduction in learning ability or lowered value for re-training as a consequence of normal aging." Gerald Maguire, Vice-President for corporate services with Bankers Life and Casualty of Chicago (which has never, incidentally, had a policy of mandatory retirement), testified that "our compensable time lost is about somewhere between a third and a fifth for the older worker as opposed to the regular worker." (Developments in Aging)

Yet the myths that scientific research and experience have shown to be false continue to exacerbate one of the great and often overlooked needs of the elderly -- mental health care. The incidence of depression, the most common mental illness for all ages, rises sharply for the over-65

population. Psychoses, the most severe form of mental disorder, are twice as prevalent in those over 75 as among those 25-34, and 25% of all reported suicides are committed by those 60 years of age and older. Still, only about 4% of the budget of the National Institute of Mental Health is being devoted to research and services for older Americans specifically, and nationwide only 4% of the clients being served by community mental health centers are 65 or older. Only about 2% are receiving on-going treatment or counseling, and about the same percentage of Medicare reimbursements are being spent on mental health care.

Among the reasons given for the failure of the present mental health system to serve the elderly adequately were: the stigma many older people attach to seeking mental health care; diagnostic failure due to a lack of differentiation between the physical and mental problems of the older patient, often complicated by the interaction of prescription drugs; lack of training of physical and mental health professionals in geriatrics and the special needs of the elderly; and conscious or unconscious discrimination by mental health professionals against the elderly (the "why bother" attitude). It is significant that the National Institute on Aging states that 10 to 15% of the cases of organic brain syndrome, or true senility, are reversible, and 30% treatable, yet 50% of the elderly in nursing homes are there because of a diagnosis of senility, and many with mild to severe symptoms of the disease are left untreated. (Developments in Aging, 1980)

There are many more figures relating to the lives of the aged that could be related here, but these are the ones that show, we believe, that too few older Americans are getting all, or enough of, the resources they need to feel that they have reached the best years of their lives. With adequate resources -- financial, health, social support, and education -- the growing body of citizens over 65 may continue to pursue what Freud took to be the major psycho-social tasks of adulthood: to love and to work. We can, as a society, do something about the resources, and ensure that there is work of some kind, paid or volunteer, for those who want it. But what of love? We cannot provide directly for every older person, someone to love and be loved by, but we can provide the ways for people to reach out to where love may be found, or at the very least, to learn to love and respect themselves. Libraries have nourishing food for the mind and the spirit.

Alvin Toffler speaks to this in his remarkable book, The Third Wave:

> To create a fulfilling emotional life and a sane psychosphere for the emerging civiliation of tomorrow, we must recognize three basic requirements of any individual: the need for community, structure and meaning...Any decent society must generate a feeling of community. Community offsets loneliness. It gives people a vitally necessary sense of belonging. Yet today, the institutions on which community depends are crumbling in all the techno societies. The result is a spreading plague of loneliness. From Los Angeles to Leningrad, teen-agers, unhappy married couples, single parents, ordinary working people and the elderly all complain of social isolation...Community demands more than emotionally satisfying bonds between individuals, however. It also requires strong ties of loyalty between individuals and their organizations.

> Just as they miss the companionship of other individuals, millions today feel equally cut off from the institutions of which they are a part. They hunger for institutions worthy of their respect, affection and loyalty...One clue to the plague of loneliness lies in our rising level of social diversity. By de-massifying society, by accentuating differences rather than similarities, we help people to individualize themselves. We make it possible for each of us more nearly to fulfill his or her own potential. But we also make human contact more difficult. For the more individualized we are, the more difficult it becomes to find a mate or lover who has precisely matching interests, values, schedules or tastes. Friends are also harder to come by...The break up of mass society, therefore, while holding out the promise of much greater self-fulfillment, is at least for the present spreading the pain of isolation. If the emergent third wave society is not to be icily metallic, with a vacuum for a heart...it must restore community.

Toffler suggests

> beginning where community usually begins -- in the family, by expanding its shrunken functions... Only a fool would favor...making old people completely dependent upon their families as they once were. But why not offer tax and other incentives for families -- including non-nuclear and unconventional families -- who look after their own elderly...why not reward, rather than economically punish, those who maintain and solidify family bonds across generational lines?

And so, we turn to look at some of the many programs that have emerged as responses to the needs of older Americans, many of these indeed geared to helping them to find community, structure and meaning in a world as changed as they often feel themselves to be.

PROGRAMS AND RESPONSES BY LIBRARIES AND OTHER AGENCIES

Many of the programs that have emerged as responses to the needs of older Americans have been initiated and carried out during the past decade. Few, if any, have been geared specifically to older women, which accounts for the absence of emphasis on such programs in this chapter. However, a great number have come about since the White House Conference of 1971, and there has been little time to obtain feedback, to adjust or even to evaluate them very satisfactorily.

Inevitably perhaps, whether in the area of health, nutrition, housing, safety, employment or social well-being, existing programs, including library programs, have been geared for the most part to helping the minority among the aging who are homebound, frail, institutionalized, ill and poverty-stricken. The thrust of much of the federal activity to date, under the Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, has been to effect a service delivery strategy that increases the ability of agencies and communities to address the needs of the most dependent and hard to reach. However, this same policy, in the words of the NCOA's Policy Center on Education, Leisure and Continuing Opportunities has "fostered an atmosphere of 'doing for,' care-taking and increased dependency."

With a big push from the recommendations of the 1971 White House Conference -- especially those concerning nutrition -- the OAA was legitimized as a major piece of social legislation by 1973, and by 1978 a network of some 600 Area Agencies on Aging was put in place. Under the 1978

amendments, the Administration on Aging was given responsibility for coordinating non-OAA programs affecting the elderly. Also, under the terms of the 1978 amendments, state agencies were given responsibility for serving patients in long-term care facilities, and area agencies were required to spend at least 50% of their Title III-B Community Services allotment on the following priority services:

- Access services, including transportation, information and referral, and outreach;
- Legal services;
- In-home services (homemaker and home health aide, visiting and telephone reassurance, and chore maintenance); and
- A separate and expanded authority for home-delivered meals.

Explicit recognition was given to the need to "provide a continuum of care for the vulnerable elderly," and agencies were directed to give preference in the delivery of services to those with "the greatest economic or social need." (Developments in Aging, 1980)

Because the older people with the most problems have been the subject of the most focus and the target for the most services, they have tended to become the most visible presence of the aged and to skew the thinking about the entire population. The well, mobile and viable aged have been identified with them. Says John Balkema, "In popular thinking, and too often in the minds of professionals, people, once they reach 65, become all alike. The stereotypes of age, which begin to affect people in their mid-forties, descend en masse to envelop them at age 65." Not only do

older people become more diverse rather than more similar with advancing years, but again in Balkema's words, "In the past few years new concepts have emerged showing that a person of 85 is no more like a person of 65 than a person of 40 is like a person of 20." (Catholic Library World)

It seems clear from the trends and projections that more programs planned for the healthy, the better educated, the more emotionally secure and independent will be the wave of the future. It is with the area which has seemed least pressing in the past -- that of lifelong learning, leisure, life satisfaction and growth opportunity -- and the implication of all of these for library action -- that we shall probably be especially concerned. The shift in attitude, the almost complete about-face that is in the making, from considering the aged as a big homogenized problem and burden, to thinking of them as "a growing and invaluable source of experience and productivity" will greatly affect all programs in the future. (From the Preface to the Report of the Senate Special Commission on Aging, 1980)

Now, though, we shall look at some representative library-initiated and conducted programs, and some others, which are at present part of the service to the elderly which Balkema characterizes as being "a patchwork affair involving many agencies." Among his examples he included the program of Books for the Blind and (more recently) Physically Handicapped which has emanated from the Library of Congress for just about 100 years, thereby considerably pre-dating other library efforts!

Other library programs of special or direct benefit to older people were initiated by sensitive and far-seeing adult services librarians in the 1930s and 40s. Services to the homebound, of which instances may be found as far back as the turn of the century, was always primarily a service to older people. The first publicized direct service to the elderly was the "Live Long and Like It" club established by the Cleveland Public Library in 1946. Programs modeled upon this one began to appear all over the country. It was acknowledged leadership in service to elders that led to the Cleveland library's contract with the Office of Education's Bureau of Libraries (then DHEW) in 1970 for a study in connection with the 1971 White House Conference. A National Survey of Library Services to the Aging at that time turned up some 1,300 programs in public libraries serving populations of 25,000 or more, and described them in some detail, so the number of libraries involved in this service even before 1971 was significant.

During the 1970s there was a good deal of study of the library and information needs of the elderly, and programs proliferated. Many of these have been initiated with Library Services and Construction Act grants, and then moved to local funding as they proved their worth. Although the 1973 amendments to the Older Americans Act included opportunities for strengthening library service to older adults through a new LSCA Title IV, "Older Readers' Services," this title was never funded, and services to the aging are provided from Title I of LSCA, "Library Services." Increasingly, services

in which libraries play a role are supported with a mix of funds from other sources such as Title III-B of OAA, CETA, Social Security's Title 20, Adult Education, Higher Education, and others. (Developments in Aging, 1980)

There is general agreement by those in the library community who have had experience with programs and services for the aging that a great deal more of value could be accomplished with only a proportionately small increase in resources. There is widespread agreement, too, among librarians that programs should:

1. Be pursued in collaboration with other community agencies, organizations and education institutions that are also serving the older population;

2. Be planned with (as opposed to just "for") users and potential users, and evaluated with their involvement in order to ascertain program effectiveness in meeting objectives;

3. Be flexible as to setting, since the concept of fitting materials and programs to people where they are -- physically, educationally and emotionally -- in familiar, comfortable surroundings is of paramount importance; and

4. Be lavish with the use of nonprint materials, paperbacks, large-type books and other materials especially selected to match the interests and overcome physical and educational handicaps of so many of the present elderly (especially the very old and those in institutional settings).

Library services to older Americans can be characterized generally as informational and developmental. They are apt to place heavy emphasis on outreach delivery strategies at present, and they are both direct to the elderly and to service providers for the benefit of the elderly. Substantively they can be categorized as:

- Information and referral services that assist individuals to find their way through the maze of programs and entitlements. Most of these deal with the area of "survival" and "coping" and are in the domain sometimes described as "instrumental";
- Employment and training for volunteerism, and goal-oriented learning programs; and
- Education/Recreation/Leisure programs for self-actualization, growth and socialization.

One perceives that some libraries have been so engrossed in the innovative, outreach and delivery aspects of their undertakings that they have had fewer resources than they might have wished to expend on content. There appears to be a great need for more special materials -- nonprint materials especially -- geared to the interests of the old-old (the more traditional, less educated and more inclined to be frail).

To quote Balkema again:

> The library alone can do much for the elderly citizen. The library as part of a team can be far more effective than when working alone. It can, in concert with other agencies, go a long way toward coordinated service delivery. As a Bicentennial project, the National Voluntary Organization for Independent Living for the Aging (NVOILA) sponsored community-based coordination through the Operation Independence Project. In each cooperating community there was a lead agency to coordinate local activities, all of which were aimed at keeping the elderly out of the congregate care institutions. These local projects could be as extensive as a coordination of all home care programs, including home library services, or as simple as a community effort for mental health screening, using the library as publicity outlet for the program. All in all, projects were designed and carried out in over 200 localities, a significant number of which involved the local library. Although the national demonstration is completed, the work is being carried on by NVOILA and its members, of which the American

> Library Association is one...(While) the local coordinator was most often an agency other than the library, there are many examples that can be given of the library acting as prime mover in community programs.

Balkema gives two examples in Monroe County, New York and Daniel Boone Library, in Missouri:

> The congregate meals program of the Older Americans Act (formerly the Title VII Nutrition Program) provides for daily inexpensive hot meals in congregate sites to be coupled with nutrition education. In Monroe County, N.Y., the outreach staff of the library system works with the meals program, bringing the library to the people, rather than the people to the library. Using outreach staff and senior aides, they provide consumer education, information and materials including nutrition education, and recreation, such as senior artists and films, at each of the congregate meals sites, thereby reaching hundreds of elders regularly who would not otherwise be served by in-house programming. This is a fine example of a mutually beneficial liaison, wherein the nutrition program is greatly enriched by the library program and the library, using the nutrition sites, is able to reach a large body of constituents who would otherwise be without library services.

Information and Referral services are now (since 1978) mandated as part of the Older Americans Act. Many senior centers have set up their own I & R service, while others are at least collaborating with the public library in order to give the service some depth and information-professional expertise. The Tulsa City-County Library manages a special I & R program for the elderly which provides a 24 hour a day, 7 days a week hotline referral service. On the other hand,

> The Daniel Boone Regional Library in Columbia, Missouri, whose outreach department visits about 500 elderly people in nursing homes each month,

> declined to set up and run the required I & R service for the elderly when asked to do so by the Boone County Council on Aging, on the grounds that their budget and personnel could not be stretched to do the job adequately. However, it was far from a flat turndown. Members of the library staff attend Council meetings and have provided many types of technical assistance to the Council's own staff in setting up and arranging information systems, compiling a combined title and title-keyword index and a comprehensive index of services. They devised a plan for keeping files updated and accurate, and a library staff member chairs a task force made up of the representatives of major agencies serving elders -- meals on wheels, OATS, social security, voluntary action center -- with the goal of reaching all older citizens in Boone County with information about all agencies that can provide them with assistance. (Catholic Library World)

Both of these programs and many others illustrate what can be accomplished when libraries work hand in hand with other agencies. Basic to the task is knowing where the elders are, assessing their needs, and knowing what other agencies serving them are doing before designing programs.

The majority of programs have been geared to the vulnerable elderly who must be reached usually outside of the library itself. NCOA defines this segment as being "nearly one-third of the nation's total elderly population, comprised of the hard to reach who need special services in order to be able to function in the community." Often their impairment is partial and may limit their mobility in only some respects. Growing numbers of people who are living longer with impairments cannot for a variety of reasons avail themselves of walk-in "regular" library services.

Linda Mielke, a specialist in community services in the Division of Library Development and Services at the Maryland

State Department of Education calls programming "an effective way to reach groups of impaired elderly in nursing homes or senior centers." During a series of workshops on programming for Older Adults, sponsored by the Division with the Anne Arundel County Public Library's "Care-A-Van" staff, a session on age-consciousness was followed by program ideas.

> This age-consciousness-raising can be an important function for libraries to carry out for providers of services to the elderly -- personnel in health care agencies and senior centers as well as library workers. A sound background in the gerontological literature, much of which has appeared in the past decade, is often lacking in providers of human services. The professional literature on aging written for service providers who work directly with the elderly is scattered through many professions with an elderly constituency and is found mainly in academic libraries, a few special libraries, in federal and local government agencies and in private organizations. As aging networks expand, more of this literature is being collected in public libraries, but there is still widespread age-stereotyping and age distortion among providers themselves as among the general public. (Balkema)

To change these attitudes, Mielke reports that the consciousness-raising segment of her workshop includes a talk by a Gray Panther, whose organization has been in the forefront of the age-consciousness movement, followed by a talk by a medical doctor with information about the impaired and non-impaired in the community and how many of each the library is already serving.

Program ideas included: storytelling for older adults; the Wisconsin experience with the Bi-Folkal Project (of

which more later); Bibliotherapy and poetry therapy; puppeteering; and the National Council on Aging's Senior Center Humanities Program.

Mielke points to bibliotherapy, poetry and art therapy, as being effective programming techniques especially for the impaired elderly but enjoyed also by the more independent. Certified therapists in each field are few in number, but people with some professional experience and knowledge can present useful programs. Of course, in addition to group programming, services on a one-to-one basis to the impaired can mean the difference between isolation and a feeling of relationship and involvement with the outside world. (Catholic Library World)

Arleen Hynes, a certified poetry therapist and librarian in the circulating library at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, D.C. (a mental hospital) is an advocate of bibliotherapy as a regular public library programming technique with the normal elderly, to promote preventive mental health and personal growth as well as possible healing. "The beauties of nature and the function of everyday things like doors or daffodils or daybreak are described by poets," she says; "the idiosyncracies of human hearts are depicted in short stories, plays or novels. These are the tools the poet or bibliotherapist uses to open the inward eye." She talks about the kinds of insights into self and others that can ensue from the reading of such a poem as Wordworth's "I Wandered Lonely as A Cloud" or Crapsey's two-line poem, "On Seeing Weatherbeaten Trees."

Although no precise figures on how many public libraries provide bibliotherapy on even a modest scale are available, Ms. Hynes cites the example of the Santa Clara County Public Library which has had a full-time bibliotherapist on its staff for several years. Initially established with LSCA funds, the program was being partially supported in 1979 with Revenue Sharing funds. The program, coordinated with the County's mental health department serves groups in various settings (prisons, mental health centers) as well as the elderly. Hynes reports that "Ms. Lack uses multi-media presentations to hold interest, especially when she works with the elderly. Then she combines short amounts of humor, film, poetry, and plays...The number of people eager to receive these services is large. Continued funding of this project speaks in recognition of its value." She believes that "the library is a natural setting for bibliotherapy sessions" and that more and more librarians as well as mental health professionals will use "the tool of literature to help persons toward self-affirmation...The aging are persons for whom getting in touch with feelings would have special value." (Catholic Library World)

The National Endowment for the Humanities Senior Center Humanities program, coordinated through a grant to the National Council on Aging, is designed to bring new horizons to older people, to bring happiness and a feeling of growth, beyond mere survival. It is most effective as a group program, and equally effective on a one-to-one basis with a physically impaired person. It is in fact a book or

literature discussion program in which many libraries collaborate. Someone who likes to read but is wheelchair bound may also take great pleasure in developing writing skills. At the Second Horizon Senior Center in Colorado Springs, the frail elderly from a nearby nursing home have been joined, with library cooperation, by mobile elders to discuss such writings as Personal Geography by Coatsworth, The Little Shoemaker by Singer, and Emerson's Terminus. (Mullane)

Says involved humanist Knight, "Older people identify with characters in the literature they are reading and through their analysis of feelings and reactions they are able to rise above their own tensions and deal with the problems of others and with broader issues facing older people as a whole." (American Education)

Recognizing the need of many who are unable to leave their homes, the Pierce County Library System in Tacoma, Washington, has put the study units for the Humanities program on remote access telephone for the individual use by the elderly, blind, disabled, shut-in and hospitalized. The library receives as many as 100 calls a day from the isolated persons thus served. This project in turn has spawned the "Life Journeys" program in which seniors read modern fiction and tell related stories from their own past. They bring in family photos for use as subjects in short story writing assignments. (Mullane)

The senior humanities program reaches individuals from vastly different educational and social backgrounds, from former state senators with advanced degrees to retired laborers whose working days left them no time for learning to read with enjoyment. One key to the program's wide appeal is its adaptability. Bound books or study units are provided to each group, as are recorded tapes in both Spanish and English. Discussion leaders generally follow the course outline, but are urged to improvise according to particular needs and desires of participants.

The humanities program has been held at some 800 service centers, including senior centers, nursing homes and libraries, and "has had the effect of upgrading the level of programming in senior centers." It has sparked new interests and new projects like the tapes prepared by center members in Sandy, Oregon, about the city's historic landmarks, now being used by the local historical society for tours. "The courses have meant new friendships, shared interests and intellectual renewal for participants." (Mullane)

At least two outstanding "package programs" have been devised by libraries and librarians, both of them multimedia, and both useful with impaired and independent elderly alike.

What is now Bi-Folkal Productions, Inc., a non-profit company to handle sales of its "Remembering Kits," began in the mid-1970s when two graduate students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison's library school noticed that libraries

were not as successful in reaching senior citizens as they wanted to be. Says Kathryn Leide, "We were interested in a kind of outreach program, a way of serving people who weren't regular customers of the library." The two secured federal grants through the Wisconsin Division of Library Services, and set about creating a multi-media, multi-sensory set of kits for librarians -- and others -- to use with older people. The kits were built around a particular theme of experiences shared by older citizens. "Through a variety of smells, sounds, objects to touch, jokes, slides, recordings, songs, skits and pictures, the elderly were taken on a nostalgia trip to their past." The kits were tried out locally, after being developed with much library research and visits to nursing homes. For instance, in a Lutheran home, "Remembering County Fairs" was enjoyed by residents wearing straw hats, drinking hot apple cider, while playing guessing games, watching slides of early fairs, viewing a movie of a quilting bee, and taking part in a singalong.

Another kit, "Remembering 1924" is full of era reminders, including mahjong tiles, Edna St. Vincent Millay poetry, a price list, tapes of songs, and "scratch and sniff" pads of such odors as gin (reminder of Prohibition). "Remembering Train Rides," "The Depression," and "School Days," are all accompanied by folksy sights, sounds, smells and "feelies." The kits come with directions and are so self-contained that they may be borrowed from libraries and used in nursing

homes and senior centers without special help. They allow participants to share experiences related to the theme and the times, and to build a sense of camaraderie. (Haws, in Library Journal)

Baltimore County's Public Library System in Maryland is another public library that is going into programming for older citizens in a big way. They now have twenty audiovisual program packages under the title Gray and Growing, which are available for group use and are heavily booked into senior centers and also nursing homes. The library's communications staff has made some films itself, and also incorporates some of the "Remembering" kits into its packages. A manual of directions and discussion ideas accompanies each package. Information topics of interest to elders include crime prevention, physical and mental health, nutrition, political awareness and sex; other packages are purely recreational.

The Baltimore County Library system also has videotaped and is circulating 10 half hour programs for TV showing, called Generations. It was made possible by the opening of a videotape facility at one of the library's branches. Like the program packages, Generations has been funded in part by LSCA funds. The library system also sponsors videotape production classes for seniors and has included them as narrators, interviewers as well as in production of the TV presentations and packages. A special newsletter listing events, discount tickets and other opportunities and resources, called Three Score and More, is widely distributed

in the County to institutions and individuals. The programming-communications staff of the library also prepares training films for librarians and other personnel about how to provide programming to older adults both inside the library and at sites outside of it. The library also sponsors workshops for seniors who are active, or would like to be, in leadership and programming for senior centers, on such possibilities as inter-generational programs and how to conduct an oral history project. (Gray and Growing Manual and other materials)

All of these Baltimore County programs are particularly good examples of the new kind of programming that is emerging from libraries for the mobile, active older people who want to learn, express, develop new dimensions, contribute and perhaps influence the society around them.

A Bouquet of Library Programs

It was difficult to decide whether to tell about the following programs by categories -- separating those for the dependent from those for the more independent elders -- or perhaps identifying them as education often defines programs as geared for "coping and survival," "expression," "contribution" or "influence." It was decided to present by place, because it is useful to see how many kinds of efforts and services are being undertaken by one library system.

In Houston, the institutional staff of the library works in cooperation with program coordinators in 37 nursing

homes and senior nutrition sites. One librarian with three clerical assistants provide movies and slide tape programs to people at the sites; and large type books, magazines and other materials are lent to the centers for resident use. Houston's "Books by Mail" program was originally funded by LSCA and designed to serve the elderly, but it has now been expanded to include services to working parents, the home-bound, and others who find it hard to get to the libraries themselves. While many requests are filled from the "Books by Mail" core collection of paperbacks, users may borrow books from any agency in the system, requesting titles by phone or mail. A special catalog goes to patrons monthly, listing all new books available.

Also in Houston, for mobile elders, along with anyone else who wants to come, there are short programs during the noon hour. Thursdays and Fridays are devoted to mini-series, with topical programs over a two- to six-week period on such themes as finances, pre-retirement planning, self-awareness. The library has worked closely with a number of community groups such as the Mental Health Association, the Family Service Center and the Houston Grand Opera Association to plan these programs.

The Houston Library System has also been the recipient of a NEH public programs grant for the Learning Library Program to provide continuing education opportunities for adults and children outside a classroom setting. Emphasis was on the ethnic heritage of Houston's principal population segments with special consideration of the social and cultural

heritage of the Mexican-American community. Many seniors were involved, some as active participants in talks, demonstrations, and displays centered on such topics as "Death, Dying and Grief," "Our Ancestors' Groves," "Featuring Families" and "Houston: A Woman's History." More than 20 branches and the central library were involved, and efforts were made to link children's activities, such as a two-part program on family roots and heritage, including discussion of heirlooms and photographs, to programs for older adults.

The Upper Cumberland Regional Library Center, headquartered in Cookeville, Tennessee, began its program in 1975 by providing library services to nine nutrition centers in the nine county area it serves. Later the program was expanded to provide services to 12 nursing homes. When the nutrition center program had to be discontinued due to a cut in funds, the nursing home visits continued. The library felt that if it had to choose between service to the able elderly -- those found in the walk-in centers -- and the frail, institutionalized, they would opt for services to the latter for whom there were so few opportunities. Comments from the first year of service are enlightening:

> The large print books have become very much in demand, and it has been difficult to keep ahead of many readers with the purchase of new titles. At first some were hesitant about accepting the large print books...but it has opened a whole new world to them. Others who said they read only the Bible and the newspaper are now enjoying Jesse Stuart's books, inspirational titles, and even westerns....
>
> It was found that considerable time and personal attention was required in helping

> patients to make book selections. Many had never had the opportunity to develop a reading habit, and had difficulty in selecting books for themselves. By now, a few of the people have become familiar enough with some of the books and authors to recommend them to others...Particularly at some of the centers where people were a little slow to start reading, participants now express an interest in reading, and have asked for assistance... We notice that often people who began reading because of special interests in only one area later expanded to a more varied selection of books.
>
> At each visit to the nutrition centers, a 30-minute book and film program was presented... books were discussed briefly...100 or so books enabled them to browse...and between visits they often exchanged books among themselves... personal contact and attention was an important part of the program...Picture-type books provided by the library have been used extensively by the nursing home staffs with the confused patients, as mental and visual stimulation for purposes of motivation and re-orientation. (From reports to the State Library Agency and letters)

Good working relationships have been established between library personnel and staff at all the nursing homes. The success of the library's work depended in a large degree on the commitment of the nursing home staff to its objectives, and "It is in the nursing homes where this commitment is evident that the strongest library programs have been established." Although the primary service of the Upper Cumberland Library System is to the elderly, an important spin-off is the service to staff members. Films and other materials for in-service training sessions are supplied and individual staffers often request special books and other material. The project librarian has taken care to become

informed of new developments and materials in the health care/geriatrics fields, and has prepared annotated lists for the staffs.

The LINC (Library Information Center) of the Memphis and Shelby County Public Library System is a fully integrated I & R service which operates as the only comprehensive service of this nature for the citizens of Memphis and Shelby County. The major portion of the funding comes from the library's regular budget, but the program does receive a grant from the Area Agency on Aging each year. This enables LINC to serve the elderly in three outlying counties -- rural Fayette, Tipton and Lauderdale. By June of 1980, some 2200 copies of LINC's Directory of Human Services had been distributed to agencies and human services workers in the four-county area. Cooperative efforts included those with churches and other social agencies. About 8.75% of the total I & R requests during the 1979-80 year were from senior citizens.

At the Lancaster County Library in Pennsylvania, LSCA funds in 1980 mounted a system-wide project to provide both print and non-print materials of special interest to residents of the area senior centers and nursing homes. Both paid and volunteer staff were trained in the use of library materials for programming, and training sessions were videotaped for future training sessions and accompanied by a training manual. Some 37 homes and eight senior centers are benefiting.

In Pottsville, also in Pennsylvania, the library expanded services to the county old age and nursing care facility and trained resident volunteers in basic circulation techniques so that they could serve residents on a daily basis.

Several big city libraries, including those of Milwaukee and Detroit, have specially equipped bookmobiles which visit senior housing projects and nursing homes on a regular basis with large type books, recordings and other materials. Many of the mobile units accommodate wheelchairs.

The Morning Callers Project, coordinated and managed by the Tulsa City-County Library, provides telephone reassurance to solitary shut-ins to be sure all is well. During a recent especially hot Oklahoma summer, this library distributed electric fans donated by the public to seniors whose homes were without air conditioning. Tulsa librarians visit local companies to conduct pre-retirement workshops. These sessions prepare people to take up hobbies, introduce them to the joys of regular reading, and suggest other activities for the time after they will have left their jobs. Tulsa's special I & R service for seniors, mentioned earlier, maintains a file of agencies and programs and also keeps an up-to-date list of speakers who can address groups about aging, retirement and like subjects.

The Monroe County, New York program, already mentioned for its tie-ins with congregate meal programs, is headquartered in Rochester and is considered to be among the best all-around, multi-dimensional programs for the elderly. Its Project Libra (Library Information, Books and Research

for the Aging) provides training to older people in how to become speakers and lobbyists on their own behalf. The library has Kurzweil equipment, a computer which reads printed material aloud to the visually impaired, and also a Visual Tek which magnifies 60 times and can be used for stamps, reading fine print, etc.

Monroe County also publishes a directory of older artists who perform for a fee or for free, called You Can Shine, which includes magicians, book reviewers, a quilting expert and many others. There is also a list of day trips (activities within a 50 mile area), local media programs of interest, and a list of subsidized housing and other services available to seniors.

The library in Muscadine, Iowa circulates 40 hand-held and lighted magnifiers, while in San Diego the County Library loans videocassettes on travel, hobbies and sports for seniors, with the equipment to play them.

The Tucson Public Library in Arizona sponsors classes for elders in fiscal responsibility, planning for retirement and cooking for one or two. Even more interesting, perhaps, because of its stimulus to creativity, is the library's writer-in-residence program which is spearheading assemblage of a book of poetry by patrons over 60 which the library will publish.

The Brooklyn Public Library's SAGE program utilizes 15 senior assistants to help present film lectures, run trips to cultural events and Senior Stop, the library's special I & R service. Brooklyn's library has been doing special

programming for older people since 1952, when the Flatbush branch began daily programs for seniors. Its program title prefigures, incidentally, the use of SAGES to designate older people whose talents could be put to work on a sytematic basis as consultants, lecturers, and in other resource roles, as suggested recently. (Kaplan)

People of 62 and older can call TOTE (Transportation for the Elderly) for a ride to town, to doctors' appointments and for other errands. TOTE is a telephone dispatch service supervised by the Plainedge, N.Y. Public Library in conjunction with the Red Cross. The same library has a newsletter, Discovery, for older citizens, which features such information as emergency fuel sources, news of energy tax credits, and where to get other help.

In Batesburg, South Carolina, the Lexington County Library, like so many others,

> serves our senior citizens both as an integrated part of our regular patronage and as a separate entity in outreach services to the County's nursing homes, retirement homes, and senior centers...I also do programs for senior groups which meet in the community, and we have sponsored several programs with outside speakers in the library addressing such subjects as crime prevention, medication education, poetry, pottery workshops and physical fitness. (Letter from librarian)

This library also prepares radio spots for a program, Senior Scene, holds workshops for service providers to the elderly on such topics as "Death and Dying" and prepares lists of non-ageist books for children. The library works closely with the Council on Aging and other agencies to provide programs in both the library and senior centers. It is

one of two such programs in the state funded originally by LSCA as demonstrations, this one to be picked up as part of the local budget at the end of the grant period.

In Connecticut, the State Division of Library Development collaborated with the State Department on Aging to prepare a statewide directory of Education and Training Resources on Aging, and copies were sent to all public and institutional libraries. To help seed and share new efforts for older citizens by libraries, the Division described some services for elders being rendered around the state and disseminated this report. Focus in most of these programs is for the "old-old" and immobile. Among them: the Guilford Library sponsors storytelling at a nursing home and a Valentine's Day Concert by a Senior Citizens' Band. In Hamden, senior citizens volunteer more than 1,300 hours of assistance in a year at the library, and the library also participates in a program to employ senior aides. In Meridan, surveys of the wants and interests of residents in homes and housing units are conducted periodically, and book selection reflects the expressed desires. Books are delivered monthly in collaboration with the Junior Women's Club. Seymour has magnifiers for circulation. In South Windsor, the Senior Calendar lists the library's "Booked for Lunch" and the minibus brings elders to the library. Westport holds poetry workshops at the Senior Center three times each month, as well as travel logs, booktalks and book discussions. A branch of the West Haven Public Library, located in the community center, coordinates programs with the senior center at the same location,

and special programs include sound slide production classes and a NCOA/NEH book discussion program. This library also displays art by seniors and hobby displays, and coordinates with the local AARP chapter.

In Boone, Iowa, the Old Settlers Library is a separate branch which serves the old and middle-aged in the older part of town. A special book collection is brought to life with programs and games scheduled once a week, a crafts class twice a week, a potluck meal every third Friday, and entertainment, which includes a folk singer, slides and films about the town's history.

Several libraries have recruited nursing home residents to read to children and to review books for them, while the Rhode Island Department of State Library Services circulated book reviews by older persons of books likely to appeal to others. Talking Books for the Blind users put their reviews on tape.

The Austin Public Library in Texas, another recipient of an OAA grant, used it to expand services from bookmobile visits to a single nursing home to a comprehensive program serving isolated and confined citizens in two counties. Personal contact was achieved by daily visits to the homes and retirement complexes with framed art prints, cassette tapes and players for them. Group programming included book reviews, poetry readings and musical presentations. The library supplied film and slide projectors and a 35 mm. camera for photography programs run by nursing home or senior center staff.

In Shreveport, Louisiana, the library system sponsored a symphony for seniors in conjunction with the Louisiana Arts Council and the Shreveport Symphony. Performances by the orchestra's woodwind and string quartets were offered in eight parish (county) sites with an opera dress rehearsal (Rigoletto) the highlight, attended by 1200 seniors. Quartet performances were staged in branch libraries and in churches.

One could give many more examples from every part of the country, from large city systems to small town libraries whose resources may be meager but whose goodwill and ingenuity are great. It seems evident that libraries have learned much about what needs doing and how to do it for older Americans, and that many of them are ready to meet the challenge of the growing sophistication, the increasing confidence and expectations of the new over 65's.

Harriet Eisman, writing in 1979, says it well:

> In its broadest sense, public library service to the elderly can span all of the types of programs and materials that have been associated with the library as an institution of community education and public service. Actual programs developed across the U.S. show varying combinations of cultural, recreational, social service, and educational components geared to the needs of individual communities and library staffing strength...Thus the library's unique capacity to put people in touch with their own capabilities, with others, with books, music or ideas here becomes an invaluable gift to many who have been virtually cast off by our youth-oriented society.

In its guidelines for library service to the aging, the American Library Association's latest (1981) revision of its guidelines outlines involvement in three areas:

- Knowledge and Information Collection;
- Knowledge and Information Dissemination; and
- Action (including programs and projects, intergenerational involvement, Information and Retrieval, continuing education, outreach to the immobile, and many others).

To add further emphasis, Eisman quotes gerontologist Dennis Hameister, who compares the responsibilities of public libraries to those of institutions of higher education, including:

- Knowledge production and community analysis to determine client population and needs;
- Knowledge dissemination: providing the elderly themselves with life maintenance (practical) and life enrichment (cultural) information; providing the community at large with materials on the realities of the aging process; and offering information to advocacy groups; and
- Knowledge utilization: channeling appropriate information to service providers, local commissioners of aging, nutrition sites, etc., and assisting them in planning and in service delivery.

Certainly the two sets of responsibilities have much in common. "Clearly," says Eisman, "gerontologists and librarians see an important role for the public library in meeting the needs of the elderly. This enthusiasm is matched by that of the older patrons..." But senior care providers can constitute a barrier when they do not see the need for library services. (Wilson Library Bulletin)

It is clear that training in the potentials of library services with elders must be a priority for librarians. The University of Denver has a series of video tapes and slide tapes in a program entitled Vintage Programs, for use by

those who wish to plan senior services. Topics include: Library Service and the Aging, Community Cooperation, Barrier Free Access, Working with Older Employees and Volunteers, and Reaching Out -- Services outside the library. The slide tape programs include such subjects as consumer issues, nutrition and health -- all of them accompanied by study guides.

Librarians themselves will need more special training to work effectively with both the impaired and the viable elderly. The Administration on Aging is supporting the development of new curricula on gerontological services at the library schools of the University of Wisconsin at Madison, and at Rutgers, the State University.

Librarians are increasingly turning their attention to the kinds of programming that rely upon older persons themselves for their operation. Older people will be more and more involved as providers as well as receivers of programs for all ages. Older people are already tutoring kids, arranging exhibits and programs, telling stories, tutoring adults who cannot read, contributing to oral histories, and producing audiovisual materials. They can and will build goodwill, as well as speak, write and lobby for the aging interests and for libraries as well.

Says Pauline Winnick, for many years a young adult librarian:

> The visibility of seniors in these active roles can help to break down common misconceptions that libraries are only for children and the young. Libraries can help destroy myths about aging by helping to prepare for the transition from full-time employment to part-time jobs, career changes or satisfying leisure.

> Older people can be wonderfully influential role models to youth for the benefits of thinking, reading, and following up and relating ideas. Intergenerational programs are on the rise. In one library, a senior created puppets and helped children with puppet shows. And in one Vermont town, elders and teens worked together to locate primary source material in homes of community residents -- letters, diaries, photos and newspapers. In seeking older residents to tape interviews about old times,. young people came to appreciate their humor, their good sense, and their understanding about what it is like to be young. (American Education)

Opportunities for creative collaborative programming by public libraries are many. The aging network consisted in 1980 of ten regional offices, 57 state and territorial offices, 635 Area Agencies on Aging, and 4,204 senior centers. Since 1978 emphasis has been on their responsibility to effect "social integration of older people through policy development and advocacy." (Developments in Aging, 1980)

ACTION's whole range of volunteer programs for the elderly continues to offer opportunities to librarians. Whereas initial focus of most of these programs was on the value of service to the morale of the senior volunteers, more recent attention has focused on the benefit to those who are served by them. The Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) now includes nearly 300,000 senior volunteers. Many of them are already involved with libraries, and many more could be.

The Foster Grandparent Program, one of the most appealing of ACTION's programs and the earliest begun, started in fact with demonstration funding from the Office of Economic Opportunity in 1965. Low-income men and women, age 60 and

older, were recruited to work with children with handicaps. A modest stipend for lunch and transportation permitted them to serve without cost to themselves. The Senior Companions Program, begun in 1973, works in much the same way, with the difference that Senior Companions serve adults with special needs, often the impaired elderly.

The ability and willingness of older people to volunteer their time and energies in the future will be directly affected by changing economic conditions, and also by changing attitudes and values. "It may be that elders will increasingly seek volunteer activities characterized by high degrees of self-help and mutual aid, or which will lead to the greater empowerment of elders as a group." (Allen)

There was a modest growth in 1980-81 in the senior volunteer programs, and the objectives were to match the talents and the experiences of older persons with unmet community needs. Many notes of caution against possible exploitation are being heard, however. (See pp. 56-57.)

Jobs for pay were provided under the Senior Community Service Employment Program, a kind of special CETA for the elderly poor. Some 52,250 of them have had jobs each year on a part-time basis in senior centers, day care facilities, hospitals, conservation programs, and programs for the handicapped. Workers average 20 to 25 hours per week. In the 1979-80 program, 65% of the workers were women, 30% were minority group members, and 60% had less than a high-school education. Also, two newly authorized programs for 1980-81 were Helping Hand and Income Counseling.

Some new opportunities for library intervention and collaboration might be found directly in the area of survival and coping information needs, such as in connection with the San Francisco Senior Escort-Outreach Program, a plan to reduce crime against the elderly. A 1980 survey of some 400 seniors in seven city neighborhoods showed that they felt that their major problems were: income, safety, health and transportation. The plan calls for a city-wide crime prevention service to the elderly in which "the Escort Service, the Police Department, and the SF Office on Aging should develop a city-wide plan to implement special senior crime prevention programs such as telephone reassurance, literature distribution, neighborhood watch, senior-oriented block clubs, senior crime prevention specialists -- all as a coordinated effort." Libraries are not mentioned, but could certainly be involved. (SF Senior Escort Service Plan)

Recalling the comparison drawn between the responsibilities toward the elderly by libraries with those of institutions of higher education introduces some enticing possibilities for libraries in the future -- and not necessarily just public libraries -- including collaboration with colleges and community colleges in providing both traditional and non-traditional types of learning experiences for older people.

The Education Amendments of 1980, for example, which re-authorized the Higher Education Act, amended Title I to include most of the community service and continuing education programs as part of a new educational outreach program.

This makes federally supported post-secondary education programs more responsive to non-traditional students, including the elderly, women returning to the work force, and persons whose age, race, sex or handicap has prevented earlier involvement in education. The emphasis is on life-long learning.

It is noteworthy that the U.S. Department of Education's motto "Learning Never Ends" symbolizes efforts by organizations representing the elderly to ensure that older Americans derive maximum benefits from federal education programs. It is of course in the Department of Education that the major federal programs for libraries are found. Adult, vocational/career and consumer education programs are also among those which offer opportunities for libraries to collaborate with other institutions on programs for the elderly.

A long list of community service and continuing education programs for older adults listed in the U.S. Senate's 1980 report calls out for collaboration by the libraries of the colleges where they were held. One hopes mightily that many were involved in such courses as "Mobilizing Educational Programs for Older Adults at Senior Facilities" at the University of Denver, "Developing Effective Volunteer Programs" at the University of Delaware, and Mississippi University for Women's "Career Development."

And then there is Elderhostel, which began just six years ago at a college in New Hampshire, and in the summer of 1981 enrolled 37,000 seniors at 450 colleges in all 50 states. Hostelers must be 60 or older, or the companion or

spouse of someone who is. The curriculum is demanding and mind-stretching. The length of courses varies from one week to several. At one college at least -- last summer, the University of Hartford -- the library did a lively business with Elderhostel students.

On that note, we will now turn to what the professionals in gerontology, the sociologist, the psychologist and older people themselves have to tell us about what they like and do not like about themselves, their present lives and what might help to make them better.

As Sam Levenson, the late comedian, said, "You may not be getting any younger, but if the best is yet to come, it will come only if invited."

PERCEPTIONS OF AGING: RESEARCH, STUDIES AND OPINIONS

Ben Franklin, at 80, still had some advice left to give: "Keep up your spirits," he said, "and that will keep up your bodies." It was good advice, then, as now, but not always easy to follow.

Certainly, the relationship between the mind and the body, between mental and physical health, has been drawn and redrawn over and over again by research, and by the life experience of countless individuals. There is a growing recognition that the health problems of the elderly require more than health services alone. "An important factor in minimizing illness is activity -- which means that older people's health can benefit from expanded free-time options, senior centers, and other programs that keep them interested, active and involved." (Grier) It is the belief of Alex Comfort that "To remain in optimal health, old people need what people need -- work to do, money to live on, a place to live in, and other people to care whether they live or die... Stop treating them as a problem when they are in fact a resource, and begin treating them as people." Work, says Comfort, is the "biggest preservative of all...real life employment is the key in preventing many of the social deficits of old age, such as loneliness, boredom, mental disturbance, poverty and deterioration..." (Gross, Gross and Seidman)

Generalizations about the elderly which show them as economically and socially deprived do a disservice by

presenting them as a problem rather than part of the solution to society's ills. The older public buys the myths along with the younger people, and if all is well with them, think of themselves as exceptions to the rule. Indeed the great majority of older people report a high level of satisfaction with their time of life -- higher levels than do young and middle-aged people. The Louis Harris survey for the National Council on Aging in 1974, published as The Myth and Reality of Aging in America, found that "Most older Americans feel that their condition in life is better, economically and socially, than the general public believes it to be...Most have both the desire and the potential to be productive, contributing citizens." (Harris)

Studies made in the 1960s and 70s suggest that the society's view of the aged has its roots in childhood. A 1976 University of Maryland study of children's attitudes toward the elderly produced such remarks as "sick," "sad," "tired," "ugly," "crippled," "chew funny," and from the same children such descriptions as "kind," "friendly," and "wonderful." Studies of children's books and also television programs show that these media play a part in projecting an image of passivity, problems, and powerlessness as being typical of old age. (American Education)

The loss of role that comes with bereavement, divorce or retirement, and the difficulties of negotiating personal and professional transitions are particular problems for women. "The vast majority of the elderly poor are women who are now reaping the fruits of a lifetime of sex

discrimination, and in the case of minorities, racial bias as well." (Sommers) For women, aging spells not only a drastic cut in income in many cases, but also loss of identity and self-esteem as well. The displaced homemaker who has outlived her "women's role" receives not a cent in retirement benefits of her own and qualifies only as a dependent. (Sommers)

Although both men and women who are old are apt to be treated as incompetent, women are more inclined to internalize the negative social evaluations, perhaps because they mesh so well with their own self-evaluations. Some of the worst problems of aging afflict widows who have never worked at jobs of any significance to them. If they have ventured outside the role of homemaker at all it was only to "help out" with the money earned. Says Sommers, "Since the traditional role of the wife in marriage is to create her identity through her husband as supporter and adjunct, when the husband dies, she loses herself as well as her mate." As one woman said, "My husband represented me as a person." Used to being located in the world as "Joe's wife" or "John's mother," she is caught between an outgrown past and an uncertain future.

Women are trained to <u>be</u>, men to <u>do</u>. Women who are now among the aged were taught that the quintessence of womanhood is to be kind, be patient, be good, be pretty, be comforting, and to be in charge of the inner world, the world of emotions. Deeply imbedded was the belief that for a relationship between a man and a woman to work, he must be more and better

than she, her superior in everything but the emotional world and the world of the home. When asked to define themselves, even women who had been successful in the professions or business did so in terms of personality, looks and relationships with people. As one woman stated it, "My work is what I do, not what I am." Men, on the other hand, defined themselves in terms of work ("I am a doctor"). None of them included "husband," and almost none "father," in definitions of themselves. (Rubin)

Being out in the work world offers advantages not to be found in traditional roles inside the home. "Identity is formed through the process of internalizing the external. A self exists in a social context -- it grows as part of interaction with the social world." (Rubin) Work is a source of income but more than that, a source of routine, of status and identity. It is a source of social interaction (fellow workers are often friends) and of meaningful experience. (George)

Dr. Hans Selye, one of the world's leading authorities on stress, emphasizes that a certain amount of stress is necessary to life and health. When we can discharge it, we do not perceive it as stress, but when we cannot cope with it, it destroys. (Gross)

Catherine (Kay) Porter at the Center for Gerontology at the University of Oregon, has developed a coping skills workshop to teach middle-aged women, older women and men usable skills for stress management in their everyday lives.

> Life transitions often produce unnecessary stress because many people lack basic stress-preventing skills. Since stress is a recognized cause of illness and death in this culture, developing skills for managing transitions can sustain and insure physical and emotional health...Regardless of one's age, coping successfully with one's environment is necessary to feeling competent and in control of one's life... (Generations)

Depression, says Rubin, is a kind of passive rebellion, and women are very apt to resort to it in old age. It is in keeping with the helplessness and dependence that women have been trained to respond to anger and to discontent in a passive mode. But even when socially prescribed parts are played perfectly, something else may go on inside. Ambivalence (to be intelligent and hide it, to be competent but appear helpless) and the contradiction between social definitions and the inner sense of self, dissonance between cultural mandates and the reality of being, could be the explanation for the prevalence of depression in women. Depression can cause havoc, mental illness and decline. (Rubin) A National Institute of Mental Health study showed that working wives suffered less depression than housewives, though still more than working husbands. (Lake)

There is very little evidence available concerning the effects of aging itself on identity and adjustment. However, what is available suggests that self-concept and self-esteem remain remarkably stable over time in most elderly persons. Much human behavior and social interaction is motivated by a desire to maintain and enhance identity. A major mechanism of identity maintenance consists of acting and interacting

in ways that are compatible with personal commitments and values. Since identity maintenance is often dependent on the opinions and reactions of others, an individual can structure the immediate environment so that it is conducive to identity maintenance. Example: an older person who finds it difficult to climb stairs but does not want to appear disabled can restrict public life to places without stairs so that a sense and image of physical competence can be fostered. (George) In other words, a person can select social and physical environments that minimize the possibilities of identity threat.

Like identity, social adjustment is a major motivational force in human behavior and social interaction. A great deal of behavior is determined by efforts to meet the demands of the environment and to maintain a sense of personal well-being. Role performance is one measure of how well an individual meets the demands of the environment, but a sense of personal well-being is largely determined by personal taste and preference. There is growing evidence, however, that in our society people do use very similar criteria to assess the quality of life. (Andrews and Withey) (Campbell, Converse and Rodgers) Respondents in several large national surveys show that people identify certain areas of life experience as important in their assessment of well-being: work, family, leisure activities and sense of community.

Said Simone de Beauvoir, French philosopher and feminist, in Coming of Age: "There is only one solution if old age is not to be an absurd parody of our former life,

and that is to go on pursuing ends that give our existence a meaning -- devotion to individuals, to groups or to causes, social and political, and to intellectural or creative work."

Again and again, research confirms that there is no typical old age or reaction to aging. Cora Cocks, a 76-year-old widow, speaks from a personal experience that belies the traumas of displacement and widowhood described above:

> I speak for the 84% of elders who live successful lives of comparative independence and satisfaction, with very little imposition on others. Life started for me with rather a traumatic childhood of unhappy experiences that gave me the self-reliance and stamina to cope with whatever troubles may come my way...I led the average homemaker's life for 51 happily married years -- PTA, cookie making, child raising, grandparenting. I also kept involved in community activities. For 15 years I directed the Christmas Seal sale; served five years on the California Commission on Aging, and at the age of 65, I organized the first birth control clinic in our city, and directed it for seven satisfying years. My life was so full of outside activities that I had no time for mourning or self-pity...I loved being 16, and I enjoyed being 30 and 40 and 60, but the seventies are the greatest...Then you reach the delicious age of choice. I can live where I please; keep the TV on late; read in bed all night; eat when I want and what I please...I have earned the right to do my own thing...I work on projects that interest me with people I like and admire...I have no complaint whatever. I think my life is great and I wouldn't trade with anyone I know. (Generations)

Mrs. Cocks is not lonely and she is not bored. There are many like her. An estimated 4.5 million older people are engaged in volunteer activities alone. In a report by the President's Task Force on the Handicapped, the assertion is made that "Much of the mental impairment of the elderly

springs from the reduction of opportunities for human contact...boredom is frequently a contributing factor."

But many cannot afford, or do not want to volunteer, their services. They want jobs, at least part-time jobs. As Tish Sommers says:

> The head set that assumes that older people should work for nothing or for carfare and lunch is cruelly exploitive, even though it may be a preventive health measure for those who participate. A large percentage of older people do not have the option of paid employment. Just because volunteering beats making macaroni jewelry at the senior center does not justify the exploitation. (Gross)

The Harris survey showed that life satisfaction was greater for those who were employed than for those who were not, among the elderly. Seventy-two percent of the older people who were employed "expected interesting and pleasant things to happen" as against 52% of those who had retired. Forty-four percent of those queried expressed interest in job training or learning new skills. Comfort stresses the importance of

> occupation, not leisure...work with dignity does not mean that occupation til death should be compulsory either through financial pressure or social convention...older citizens have as much right as the young -- if not more -- to sit on the porch and be hippies... but even these...rest upon choice, not rejection. (Gross)

There is evidence that gradual retirement, the shift from full-time to part-time employment as a transition is attractive to workers. (Schwab) The self-employed often reduce their work hours before they fully retire. (Quinn, Schwab) Sweden has a National Partial Pension Scheme, begun in 1976, which allows workers of 60 to 65 to reduce work

hours and collect partial financial support from pensions. Promoted as preparation for complete retirement, Norway and Germany have similar programs. (Hanes-Olson and Wang) Flexible retirement and much more part-time work is the goal. Lack of work options is among the reasons for the stereotypes of the elderly's inability to reflect -- their lack of opportunity to reflect -- American values of productivity, achievement, and independence. A change in image requires a basic change by all generations in attitudes toward aging, and this will not be accomplished until other age groups start talking with older people rather than about them. (Butler)

> Our challenge is to extend the fruitful middle years, the healthy and vigorous years in which we live creatively, to the best of our ability, carrying our own weight and paying our own way as productive contributors to society.
>
> The first step is to improve economic conditions, the second to change negative attitudes, and the third to acquire new knowledge about the aging process. (Butler)

"The new generation of aged will have learned to make demands. They want a voice in their destiny, first economic and political, but soon social and cultural...There is a goldmine of creativity that remains untouched for social progress for our whole society." (Gross) Says Neugarten, "Perhaps the new-old with their high level of political participation, their accelerated return to education, can create an attractive image of aging and move society toward change by lessening fear of growing old." (Gross)

Retirement is one of the most significant role transitions in later life. (Atchley) The "near" phase is characterized by anticipation; the "honeymoon" phase by relief and freedom; the "disenchantment" phase spells emotional letdown; and the "re-orientation" phase -- realities negotiated.

Retirement is not typically regarded as a dread crisis unless one is forced out. Streib and Schneider show that women have less positive attitudes toward retirement than men, and that divorced and widowed women retire later as a rule than the married and the single. Many studies show that older workers report higher levels of job satisfaction than do younger workers (Wright and Hamilton), and that many others show positive attitudes toward retirement (80% according to Streib and Schneider, also Kell and Patton).

One might expect those who are most satisfied with work to have the most negative attitudes about retirement, but this is not the case. As Seltzer and Atchley conclude: "It is apparently possible for people to be highly committed toward their profession and at the same time have other things they might like to do as well." Many, including those most satisfied with their occupations, look forward to retirement. (Study of college professors by Kell and Patton)

Occupational status, and differences in prestige, education and degree of autonomy affect the meaning of work to the individual. Those retired from upper occupational status (professional, managerial, proprietary) reported increases in satisfaction as time in retirement passed, whereas middle and lower status former workers (craftsmen, skilled workers,

sales and clerical, and semi-skilled and unskilled) reported declines in satisfaction with retirement as time went by. (Stokes and Maddox, George and Maddox)

Research has shown that the more thoroughly one plans for the retirement years, the more likely it is that these years will be successful. Life satisfactions are much higher for those who look forward to retirement, who have plans to retire to something, and not just from a job. (Marshall)

A 1974 study by the Institute of Life Insurance, confirming the message of other studies, reported that older people of today, in contrast with older people earlier in the century, are so much better educated, so much less emotionally dependent on their children, and so much better able to cope with the changing world that,

> In discussing future life cycles they hypothesize many events in the period that was formerly designated solely as 'retirement.' In one possible life cycle they list, between the ages of 65 and 85, six events: part-time work, formal education, prolonged travel, remarriage, education for leisure time activities, and a second career. This would imply advanced rather than just basic education, and second career planning rather than just the retirement 'waiting room' job. (Balkema)

As to preparation at present, studies show that few people actually participate in pre-retirement programs. (Kalt and Kohn) This is due to lack of interest as well as to lack of opportunity. There is evidence that provision of information is more effective preparation than is crisis counseling. (Glasmer and Kasschau) Middle-class people are more likely than others to have received information

and reading and discussion with co-workers and recently retired friends were the most frequently used resources.

When it comes to support systems and families, the pattern of "modified extended family" seems to be the most satisfactory. This is characterized by independent households, with frequent contacts, in person and by phone. Rosenmayr and Kockeis call this "revocable detachment" and "intimacy at a distance." Ties are in place, and support can be mobilized as needed. In the majority of families, "all generations of family members participate in complex patterns of social resource interchange and each generation receives and contributes assistance in times of need." (Rosenmayr and Kockeis)

It should be noted here that the middle-aged woman (45-59) is often at the center of the care-giving, mutual aid family unit, taking maximum responsibility for both the younger and the older members of the family. Soldo characterizes this as the "dependency squeeze" on the middle-aged woman who is quite often found, these days, balancing the competing pressures of a job or career, children or grandchildren, managing a home, and caring for parents. Becoming a grandmother in middle age, the woman of 50 or 55 may find herself the pivotal member of a four-generation family. Caring for an aged parent (often her mother or mother-in-law) and often needing to provide a home or some degree of care for the children of a divorced or working daughter, "the depiction of the empty nest years as a carefree personal growth period may be our latest myth about women." (Tobin

and Kulyp) Eighty percent of home care for the impaired elderly is provided by kin, usually the daugher, who if an older middle-aged woman, may be experiencing some health problems. (Soldo)

As Hagestad points out:

> Family bonds serve a buffer function, mediating between the individual and those events and transitions external to family life. In a society where opportunities for intimate ties have been steadily diminishing, the family remains the source of long-term primary relationships, providing help and support, confidante relationships, and personal and shared meanings. However, we need data about the life transitions of individuals who are single, divorced or re-married, and who have chosen not to have any children. Social scientists have barely considered the meaning and interweave of intimate relationships, systems of support and kinship structures of adults living outside the traditional nuclear and extended family. (Generations)

"Contrary to belief," says Comfort, "as we get older, we need relatives less and friends more." (Gross) Rosow showed that high density of older people in living arrangements created networks and friendships, so elderly housing can be good for both physical and social reasons.

Patterns of interaction and mutual aid were more extensive among lower-class than among middle-class families. (Adams) Marital relationships appear to follow a "U" course: satisfaction with the mate is high in the twenties, lowest in the forties, and high again in older age. (Campbell, Converse and Rodgers) Midlife crisis is a cause of unhappiness in marriage, and child-rearing takes a toll during the middle years. (Levinson) Married persons without

children report happier middle adulthood than do those with children. (Campbell, Converse, Rodgers)

Of course, it is the happier, intact marriages that produce these figures, since the unhappy ones have been terminated before old age. In a study by Rollin and Feldman, 82% of the older wives were very satisfied with marriage, more so than at any time in the family cycle, and 66% of the husbands were very satisfied. Post-parental life satisfactions included personal freedoms, accomplishment and discovery of children as social resources -- friends. The much touted dissatisfaction with the "empty nest" seems not to be as stressful for most -- either women or men -- as had once been believed.

Of all the resources considered to be necessary for a happy and satisfying old age, education stands out as a pervasively important one. Better educated people seem to have a more positive self-image than those who are less well educated. The Harris study of 1974 showed that 25% of those over 65 considered "not enough education" a serious problem for them, ranking close to inadequate medical care, loneliness, crime, poor health and insufficient income.

Consistently, there appears to be a correlation between the level of education and the severity of problems experienced. Retirement tends to wash out income differences, while differences in education remain. Lopata found that higher levels of education are conducive to a smooth adjustment to widowhood, because the better educated woman is more

likely to participate in community organizations and to develop new friendships. Education appears to facilitate re-engagement with society. Storant, Wittels and Botwinick report that higher levels of education are conducive to better adjustment generally, as is higher socioeconomic status. This is especially true of relocation. Working-class elders are dependent upon the social and physical characteristics of the immediate residential environment, while middle and upper classes are more oriented to relationships and resources in the broader community.

McClusky identified a four-tired hierarchy of educational need which he characterized as: "coping," "expressive," "contributive," and "influence." Expressive relates to the development of talents, creative abilities, and intellectual interest; contributive to the need to do and give to the society. It is those who seek leadership roles who aspire to education that will enable them to influence and to become change agents for society. Peter Drucker said recently that "The demand for education is actually going up, not down. What is going down, and fairly fast, is the demand for traditional education in traditional schools." (WSJ, 81) Although many people still rank education as a matter of low priority to them, the interest in and demand for educational opportunities is expected to increase as the level of formal educational attainment among the over 65 increases, since past educational experience is a factor in whether or not people participate in education in their later years. (Harris) By 1978, one third of all institutions of higher

education offered free or reduced tuition for older persons. (Cghelsvig and Timmerman) Butler believes that "education, work and retirement can be integrated and interwoven." (Butler)

It is important, though, not to draw the conclusion that people of low educational attainment cannot learn and learn to enjoy learning. The NCOA experience with the senior humanities program strongly suggests that older people can be taught new recreational, education and leisure patterns and behaviors. The experience of librarians enticing former non-readers in nursing homes underlines that while it is certainly desirable for lifelong reading habits to begin in early childhood, it is possible, given the right environment and resources, for older people to come to enjoy reading.

"Even as average levels of educational attainment increase substantially in coming decades, segments of the older population will continue to experience 'coping' needs which education can help to alleviate." (NCOA Policy Center paper)

Education can help to alleviate stress in two ways: skills can be used to confront stressful situations, and education can facilitate realistic stress perceptions and problem-solving skills. (Lazarus) Perception of the world as orderly, predictable and responsive is conducive to effective coping. (George)

Says Timmerman in a paper for the National Aging Policy Center:

> Self-sufficiency is a generally accepted goal. How can education support this objective and what educational interventions are most helpful? People need skills for economic sufficiency, to maintain a financially secure life. They also need practical skills to take care of their mental and physical health as well as to conduct their everyday living...They need skills that will not only make them self-sufficient, but will enable them to help family members, friends or the community at large. Finally, they need to grow and to continue to develop so that they can retain a positive self-image and can, indeed, wrestle with day to day coping and economic survival. Education and training have a role to play in all areas. By taking a new look at what education can do to help older persons to become self-sufficient, policy development can be more focused.

Baltes and Labouvie conclude that "a concerted program of intervention will allow us to control large segments of intellectual aging to a greater degree than is commonly supposed." With Barren and Woodruff, they advocate lifelong learning to prevent mental atrophy. (NCOA Policy Center)

And yet, says Comfort, the main emphasis for the elderly and retired is still on the kind of mindless leisure which "childrenizes older people. It means putting them down as spent persons of no public account, instructed to run away and play until death calls them to bed." And, says the NAPC background paper, "activities for older persons are structured to 'keep them busy.' Leisure time is seen as a void to be filled with bingo games, macrame classes and Golden Age Clubs."

Havighurst finds that leisure can have the same potential for people that jobs do, in that both provide opportunities for enhancing individual self-worth. (NCOA)

The Harris survey showed that 36% of those 65 and over reported spending the same amount of time reading as they did watching television, while the leisure activities of gardening (for 39%) and socializing with friends (47%) ranked higher.

What was read? There is little recent information to reflect the rapidly changing nature of the older population or rapidly changing social values, but Moshey found in 1972 that people who have been in the professions that require a good deal of reading continue to read for pleasure after retirement in their fields of interest. Many retirees who read reported that their parents and grandparents read to them when they were children, emphasizing the importance of early established habit. Short articles or stories were preferred to full-length books or novels, and light materials such as romance, mysteries and religious/inspirational books were favored. (Romani, 1973)

> Analysis of reading interests...indicates that the elderly prefer nostalgic types of writing that allow for reminiscing. This includes historical pieces. In addition, their need to assess their own lives lends itself to an interest in autobiographical materials that provide for comparison with their own life contributions. (Moshey)

This is especially true of the older elderly who are questioning whether they have had full and productive lives and whether their lives have made a difference. (Erickson) Reading about characters who have met with success in living and have been rewarded for it seems very appealing to this age group.

Both Lovelace and Wilson found that reading can provide a way to spend time alone or be the basis for a group experience.

Says Ossofsky of NCOA:

> The involvement of an increasing number of older Americans in intellectual pursuits requires that the services and resources be there to accept them. The lack of facilities and their inaccessibility remain obstacles to the participation of many older people.

The interest in senior centers has grown since they have become so widely available. Some 19% of those queried would like to go to one. The NCOA study of the senior center movement "underscores its role as a vehicle for intellectural activity and involvement, and as a bridge to other facilities and programs." (NCOA Policy Center)

Streib is right on target when he notes the need to focus attention on what he terms "systems problems" -- that is, the interaction between leisure activities and transportation, and leisure and housing. The Harris survey shows, though, that with a higher degree of education, more places are seen as convenient, leisure resources more accessible, even if transportation and other barriers do exist and must be overcome. Although fewer people over 65 used cultural, recreational and intellectu al resources than did younger or middle-aged persons at the time of the su y (1974), the use of these resources was higher by college graduates than by others among the elderly:

Libraries: by 87% of 18-54; 78% of 55-64; 63% of 65+

Movies: seen by 86% of those 18-54; 63% of 55-64; 46% of 65+

Parks: used by 80% of 18-54; 58% of 55-64; 44% of 65+

Live Theatre, Concert, Dance: 75% of 18-54; 57% of 55-64; 45% of 65+

For college graduates, clearly, library use is the most popular activity. Of all those over 65 (including non-college graduates): 22% went to the library, 22% to the movies, 18% to museums, 17% to concerts and 17% to community centers or senior centers. Time of event (day or night), fear of crime, mobility and education were all important factors in whether there was enough motivation to overcome inconvenience.

The NCOA policy background paper cites the categories of leisure involvement propounded by the Research Committee on Leisure of the International Sociological Society as being: intellectu al, aesthetic, social, civic, mass media and physical (activities). Says the background policy paper:

> Books have become more widely available through the growth of libraries, and the availability of paperbacks, mass media have disseminated entertainment -- much of which is of the highest caliber -- and travel opportunities have become available to large numbers of people. These trends will certainly continue through the remainder of this century. Consequently, as people retire now and in the future they will be increasingly more sophisticated and experienced in their use of leisure.

Whatever the level of need, whatever the level of desire, libraries can help empower older people to make later life the most satisfying part of life. They can do this by providing for those who have already reached the

status of "older" and also by helping younger people to do what Margaret Mead so wisely recommended: "To consider what you want to do later in life while you are still young." (Gross)

PRESCRIPTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS AND WHAT LIBRARIES CAN DO

The statistics of a changing and growing population, the programs undertaken in the past or currently, the findings of researchers, and the insights of those already old point in the same general direction. The "bottom line" is that older age can be made good, as can the expectations and the image of it. The implications are that libraries, in many different ways, can help to make this so.

Here are some areas of emphasis that, on the basis of the evidence, should be considered and acted upon:

1. Providing information and referral in as many areas of coping and survival as can be encompassed, and redoubling efforts to coordinate with other agencies providing similar services. Added to this should be the function of inventorying human resources -- talents, abilities, experience and knowledge -- especially those of older people themselves.

2. Taking affirmative action to change the myths and the image of older people through programs and materials selection and production for children, young adults, middle-years adults, and the older people themselves.

3. Making an intensive effort to participate in the training and continuing support of health care and social services provider staff members, to help expand their knowledge about older people, the latest research in gerontology, to change attitudes and to create awareness of the potential values of library involvement for both the impaired and the independent elderly.

4. Providing opportunities and programs for leadership training that encourage and assist active older people to exert their influence, monitor services, organize, speak and lobby -- not only on "aging" issues, but on others as well: youth, education, corrections, the courts, the environment, etc.

5. Initiating/sponsoring or collaborating with projects and programs that are intergenerational, especially those which throw young and old people together in pursuit of historical perspectives and family and community roots.

6. Producing materials and packages, with the active participation of seniors for self-contained use in outreach sites, and especially for cable and audience-response video systems and radio.

7. Initiating/sponsoring or collaborating closely with self-help programs in the area of consciousness-raising, attitude adjustment and music, art, poetry and bibliotherapy.

8. Mounting a major effort to work, through and with local groups and businesses, with midlife people (50-60), especially women, on preparation for creative aging and satisfying older years, second careers, hobbies, income, and health and intellect maintenance stressing steps to be taken during this decade of life to prepare for enjoyment of the later ones.

9. Sponsoring or tying in with all types of learning programs from basic adult education and literacy to higher education, traditional and non-traditional, including skills and materials needed for volunteer or paid employment.

10. Coordinating with all types of arts programs so that the library may become the entry point, the bridge, to many kinds of cultural experiences, through ticket distribution, joint exhibits, programs on and off-site.

Implementation of the above considerations would depend on many factors, of course. Though many seem to be, and are, geared to the active, better-educated "new-old" people entering the aging category, many also relate, or may be adapted, to the needs of the impaired, housebound or institutionalized.

Says Seskin in her book of interviews with older women:

> All of them think that it is necessary to develop hobbies and interests during a person's young and midlife years. And the women agree that the best way to 'feel young' is to keep physically and mentally active. They recommend joining groups, organizations and clubs, creating wider circles of friends and 'doing for others.' Time and time again these women affirm their roles in life as participants rather than as observers.

Timmerman explains that, "The chances are that women... who seem to be handling their age well...have personal integrity and some good social skills regardless of their physical health."

Such women can be of great service in helping others to develop some of the positive outlooks and activities suggested above. Kahn claims that

> rather than helping older persons, the great mental health revolution has only led to their dropping out of the psychiatric system. Group counseling has certain advantages. Issues of loneliness and alienation can be addressed in a group situation in which counselees find that others share their concerns.

His recommendations -- which may preview the wave of the future -- are primarily preventive and focus on the healthy rather than the pathological aspects of personality. He suggests reaching people in familiar non-medical settings.

The Continuum Center in Detroit trains older persons to work as paraprofessional peer counselors. Seven two-hour sessions are held in various community settings. Eighty percent of the clients are women. Information is presented in a large group of about 30, and feelings, values and other personalizations are shared in small groups.

> Since discussions have often brought important issues to the surface, we think it is valuable to provide opportunities for pursuing them with follow-up reading and sometimes private counseling...A librarian who periodically visits the center with a bookmobile...found that some center members have begun to ask for particular kinds of books, particularly psychology books. Peer counselors training is designed to reinforce already existent qualities of genuineness and warmth; develop communication skills; provide skills to help them to assist others in making decisions; increase self-awareness and self-confidence; and teach them some principles of group dynamics. (Troll)

Obviously, a library is already playing a supporting role in this program described by Kahn. Why not more libraries playing an even larger role: providing the "familiar, non-medical community setting"; providing books, films, pamphlets and other background and follow-up materials; being involved in training programs; and keeping "want lists" and "match lists" of future counselors and counselees?

Libraries could keep self-help inventories, and help to "identify, catalog and disseminate information about the

many innovative self-help programs...that are in operation nine times out of ten without government funds," Timmerman suggested in her paper for the NCOA's policy center. She illustrates with AARP's Widowed Persons Service which trains widows to help more recently bereaved women to cope with grief, and to seek help and referral in financial and health matters. The White House Mini-Conference on Older Women reaffirmed the importance and potential of "older women helping each other to develop positive feelings...and share problems in support and self-help groups." Libraries could provide support services and facilitation for such groups.

Image changing is another major area in which libraries need to be involved with the elderly. In Troll, Harold Feldman of Cornell University's Department of Human Development and Family Studies suggests the following approach:

> I am proposing the establishment of ageism study centers. These need to be differentiated from centers for the study of the aging, which focus on the current condition of the elderly and are not primarily concerned with changing images...Consciousness-raising has served a useful function for women and minority group members. As long as women were seen by society as being too emotional and not capable of performing in some occupations, there was justification of sexism...This group took on the characteristics attributed to them by society and this resulted in their having a lower level of self-esteem. Feeling less able, they performed poorly...By instigating consciousness-raising programs, women and blacks changed their self-image and began seeing themselves as more capable. What we need to do now is learn from the success of these movements.
>
> An ageist-oriented program would have courses, public services, research and advocacy

programs. Some examples of possible consciousness-raising programs would concern:

- Ageism in the media with special emphasis on TV. Watch TV and note how older people are portrayed;
- Ageism in children's books. Are older persons perceived as functioning effectively outside the family?;
- Biographies of the elderly who have made significant contributions to various fields such as music, art, philosophy, science, politics, in their older years;
- Discussion groups to discuss how ageism has affected women, to raise their conciousness and develop solidarity among them;
- Biology of aging, to counteract some of the current myths about physical decline that can become self-fulfilling prophecy;
- Contributions of older women to American society;
- Consumer knowledge, so that we can become aware, for example, why we have been sold the necessity of semlling like a lemon;
- Financial management for the elderly, with special attention to increasing resources;
- Contributions of the elderly to different historical periods -- American Independence, the conquering of the West, the Middle Ages;
- Healthy personality among the elderly, and old age as a time for self-actualization...;
- Geriadvocacy -- study of the political process as it relates to the elderly. One suggestion is the organization of a league of senior voters.

Says Feldman, too, "The professional centers for the study of the aging need to be more influenced in the direction of becoming more concerned with ageism and consciousness-raising among the elderly. Maggie Kuhn and the Gray Panthers

movement represents a significant step in this direction." (Troll)

One small suggestion for libraries in relation to all of this would be development of a good background collection of books and journals on aging, women and aging, etc. Perhaps some agencies, organizations and private individuals could be asked to pool their materials in the library to make them more widely available. Sarasota County's Council on Aging has recently made the decision to deposit its materials at the library, for greater accessibility.

The report from the White House Mini-Conference on Older Women, which took place in the fall of 1980, had much to say in its report about the importance of midlife planning by women for their older years. All recommendations have implications for library involvement in helping them.

> At midlife women should be encouraged to assess future financial options...and consider options for education, training and employment that could make them more secure in old age...Midlife planning can help us to become effective citizen participants who are no longer victims, but are healers of society's wrongs. (Mini-Conference Report)

Retirement planning comes too late. The Mini-Conference goes on to recommend that middle-aged and older women, including those from all the minorities, should be involved in planning model curricula for programs which could include:

1. Career counseling in non-traditional career alternatives, post-retirement, both paid and voluntary;

2. Preventive approaches to health problems to be taken in midlife; and

3. The psychology of aging women -- with emphasis on viewing midlife as a time for critical, creative reassessment of self and environment; learning about financial planning, legal and consumer issues; dispelling myths; and learning about discriminatory legislation affecting older women and what needs to be done about it.

Libraries can greatly expand their present I & R functions to include not only coping and survival assistance, but to inventory resources and maintain skill banks, to help match elderly resource people with the needs of the elderly and the community at large. Max Kaplan emphasizes focusing on what the older citizen can do for society and developing a "bank" detailing the training, backgrounds and life experience of all the community's elders. They could then be called upon as consultants, research designers, articulators, teachers, planners, conceptualizers, decision makers, and for initiation of community projects -- for a fee, or on a voluntary basis as they choose or indicate.

Libraries, with the active assistance and participation of older persons and groups, need to explore ways of identifying and collecting pertinent data of concern to older women. Women need to be educated to the value of data collection, for this data can serve as a valuable advocacy tool. The demographic facts about older women can be used in consciousness raising and to train service providers, public agencies and business.

Libraries could help carry out Butler's suggestion to train older victims of crime (in collaboration with the

police department) and to provide information on prevention techniques and coping skills to other elders.

In terms of leadership activities, libraries could take an active role in providing materials, auspices and facilities for leadership and advocacy training of all kinds, for groups and for individuals. Says the Older Women's Mini-Conference report: "We need to take greater responsibility for ourselves by taking assertiveness training, by becoming peer counselors and by building support groups..." Montaigne's assertion, quoted by Butler, is germane here: "I speak truth, not so much as I would, but as much as I dare; and I dare more as I grow older."

Butler says that older persons need to be trained in political and social advocacy and lobbying; to organize registration drives (hundreds of thousands of elderly people do not know about their entitlements); serve on boards; and mount surveillance of nursing homes and other facilities. Libraries can develop exhibits, programs about families of choice, activities of older citizens, and many other subjects to gain attention to the positive and self-propelled elderly.

> Because of the personality characteristics which tend to flower in later life, both as a result of a lifetime of experience and as a consequence of actually being old, the elderly tend to show natural inclinations for certain kinds of work: teaching, counseling, and the preservation of crafts; sponsoring and encouraging the young; serving in judicial and administrative roles; commenting on political and social events from a lifetime perspective; safeguarding of heritage through historical records, memoirs and the protection of historical objects; and conserving of

> natural resources as a legacy to the young, are some of the most prominent predilections. (Butler)

Libraries have traditionally worked one to one with individuals in order to bring all the world's knowledge into his or her focus. It is well to remember then that "the individual can be an effective change agent. One committed person can stimulate many others to take action, working through families, churches, and community organizations." (Mini-Conference on Older Women)

Helen Borchard, interviewee in Seskin's More than Mere Survival, put it this way: "The young people I know add hope, affection and gaiety to my life." And indeed older friends can add much to the uncertain lives of young people. Intergenerational programs and projects are very essential in terms of many of the recommendations and insights -- human contact and image-making are only two of them. Such programs are in fact perfect for libraries to undertake since their clientele is already cross-generational. "Intergenerational programs...help build a sense of interdependence and sharing..." (Mini-Conference) "To keep mentally limber, stay in touch with young people whose curiosity is infectious...Emulate their tendency to experiment." (Lake)

> A community-building plan might be to draw retired people into fresh contact with youth and vice versa. Older people in every community could be appointed 'adjunct teachers' or 'mentors' and invited to teach some of their skills in local schools or on a part-time or volunteer basis have one student regularly visit them for instruction...

> retired photographers could teach photography, car mechanics how to repair a recalcitrant engine...In many cases a healthy bond would grow between mentor and mentee that would go beyond instruction. (Toffler)

Jean Dresden Grambs of the University of Maryland suggests "that youth mentors hold conversations about life, work...Young people would gain much from sitting down with an elder to trace that person's life career, and gain a sense of what it means to have a future and live with it..." Older people could teach about age, about wars, examine "various professions and lifestyles...We need more 'grandpersons' programs like that in the Ann Arbor Public Schools, in which experienced and often gifted elders teach crafts, help plant gardens, and best of all are visible as likeable, lovable, warm and interesting individuals."

Libraries, too, could "loan" grandpersons for special projects and skills training.

Finally, a look at just a few of the recommendations in what is and should be the library's most closely related area: that of education, recreation and the satisfying use of leisure time.

Timmerman, head of AARP's Institute of Lifetime Learning, puts forward this thought:

> Instead of promoting increased utilization of adult education programs and removing barriers to these programs, it is necessary to look at other modes not usually counted in the education participation statistics: self-directed learning, efforts of non-profit voluntary organizations, informal discussion groups, often self-taught, correspondence and home study, self-help clubs and organizations, and volunteer skills training. In short, rather than propping up the existing structure of

> higher education in search of new clients to fill its classrooms, it might be more fruitful to help nourish existing but less established entities and stimulate innovative resource sharing within communities.

Though the library is not mentioned specifically, it could hardly be more implicitly alluded to.

Carsman has this to say:

> Courses directed to older women are now being offered by senior centers, retired condominium complexes, churches, municipal park departments, labor unions, professional associations, community organizations, and other voluntary groups. Classes are conducted both in traditional classrooms (i.e., community colleges, high schools, university extension centers) and in more readily accessible sites like recreation centers in parks, housing project meeting rooms, public libraries, and store fronts. Courses are diverse: arts and crafts, nutrition, foreign language conversation and photography, art history, consciousness raising, parapsychology, personal finances, taking care of yourself, music appreciation, creative writing, living with the dying, senior power, and lipreading, among others.
>
> Typically, classes are in the daytime, run one to three hours, over a period of from one to eight weeks. Extra impetus has been given to this educational/recreational movement by the Older Americans Act Title VII, which requires that education and direct services such as transportation be provided as part of the food program...So far most of these programs tend to emphasize skill training and socializing more than general learning. Course offerings are in a 'fun and games' spirit, rarely a mind-stretching intellectu al challenge. (Troll)

Carsman makes an additional and important point:

> If education is perceived as a part of the employment process, it seems irrelevant for those approaching retirement from the labor market. But those who see education as a growing experience should see that the need to grow does not cease at any age...Making the educational system more accessible...for

> older women...may be the single most important component to the realization of the new older woman -- one who is truly recreated. (Troll)

The summary report of a national conference on "Community Colleges: New Roles in Lifework Planning" suggests specific steps for community colleges to consider as they implement counselling, training and placement services for older adults. These steps include:

- needs assessment surveys of the older population in the community served by the college;
- initiation of community-based conferences and workshops to bring together representatives of business, labor, government and education to consider creating new part-time work opportunities for older adults;
- development of short-term training and education programs which would lead to work opportunities that are in relative demand and that are relatively inflation-proof (e.g., data processing, bookkeeping, graphic arts);
- identification of college faculty and administrators who have the commitment to work with older adults as they plan new careers/retirement options;
- creation of a national network among college professionals who would benefit from learning about program experiences in other parts of the country. (Entine)

Public and community college libraries could collaborate in adapting/implementing these ideas.

In 1978, sixteen years after the creation of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Rockefeller Foundation named a commission to assess the current state of the humanities. The report of the Commission, published in October 1980, unequivocally reaffirmed the role of public

libraries in sustaining quality of life:

> The public library is the single most important cultural institution in most communities... Unfortunately, library programs are often taken for granted. Though few people openly oppose libraries, equally few actively support them -- at least not until their own library is threatened... Too often library services are viewed as non-essential and are cut before (or more drastically than) other public services. This attitude represents an appalling social and political bankruptcy. (Rockefeller Foundation Report)

Citing the successful leadership of public libraries in such adult learning programs as Houston's Literacy Volunteers of America (described earlier), the College Board's College Level Examination Program and College Without Walls, the Rockefeller Foundation report featured libraries in two of its recommendations:

- that libraries should expand their educational programs, and improve the independent learner's access to the collections;
- that communities must keep public libraries open and preserve access to library services. Local and state governments must support public libraries by every means available. We recommend that federal support of public libraries increase in a way that neither discourages local and state support nor intrudes on the operations of local libraries. (Rockefeller Foundation Report)

Melded in with, and hardly to be separated from, education are all of the recommendations in the recreation/leisure spectrum, an area in which libraries can shine pre-eminent. The quality of leisure is important, not a trivial matter. Says Butler, "Recreation and socialization decrease illness."

The tendency of the elderly to write and rewrite scenarios can be given an outlet with the opportunity for

a Life Review:

> Life review therapy includes taking an extensive autobiography from the older person and other family members. There is use of family albums, scrapbooks, genealogies...a summation of one's life work is useful...Such a life review can be conducted in a variety of settings from senior centers or nursing homes. Even relatively untrained persons can function as therapists by becoming listeners as older persons recount their lives. (Butler)

Why not libraries? Indeed, where better, as individuals or in groups?

> Life review may be seen in film and fiction: Ingmar Bergman's Wild Strawberries; Joyce Cary's To Be A Pilgrim; Hemingway's The Snows of Kilimanjaro; Henry James' The Beast in the Jungle; di Lampedusa's The Leopard; Muriel Sparks' Memento Mori; Beckett's Krapp's Last Tape; and Leo Tolstoi's The Death of Ivan Illyich. (Butler)

Affirmation of this activity's value comes from the report of the White House Mini-Conference on Older Women: "We need to create more oral and written histories of our lives. We need to celebrate our accomplishments and recall our contributions."

Maggie Kuhn, bright and energetic founder of the Gray Panthers, has a slight variation on the Life Review which she recommends as an antidote to discouragement for young and old alike:

> It gives people a sense of their own history. By reviewing the past a person gains courage, strength and hope to deal with the future. You begin by drawing a life line. The area above the line is for your private life, your personal existence; those closer to you are part of that. Then below you write in all the powerful conditions, the influences of society. All of us are shaped by both the private and public factors.

> The beginning of the process is to look at the year of your birth. What was the situation in your family at that time? In society? The closure date is when you feel you may die. That's shocking for some people even to contemplate.
>
> By looking back at the crises in your life, you see that you've survived those; why should you think you won't survive what you're going through now? The Life Review gives you strength and the feeling that you can cope. Look at all the things you did, all the changes, all the disappointments you've been through and survived. The Life Review shows you what you've done, where you've been and lets you think about where you want to go. It's a process of continuous growth and change. (Gross, Gross, Seidman)

Again quoting from the recommendations of the Mini-Conference on Older Women: "We must begin to use the arts and through books, plays and the film to change the image of and create new perceptions of the older woman." Library-produced media and programs could help to project the little things about the lifestyle and taste of older women that can make a difference. Says Shirley Polykoff, advertising executive who made the world believe that "blondes have more fun," now retired to a second career, "You're not lonely when you have art all around you..."

"As people retire now and in the future...the breadth of their leisure interests and expectations is widening in response to their higher education levels." So says the National Aging Policy Center background paper by way of introduction to a definition of leisure proposed by Gordon, Gaitz and Scott:

> Leisure is personally expressive discretionary activity varying in intensity of involvement from relaxation and diversion at the low end

> of the continuum, through personal development and creativity at higher levels up to sensual transcendence at the highest levels of cognitive, emotional and physical involvement.

This definition, says the policy background paper, builds upon the objectives of leisure initially developed by French sociologist Dumazedier:

> At one end of the scale is relaxation, encompassing solitude, quiet resting and sleeping. Next, diversion includes passive entertainment, reading, hobbies, games and socializing. Development activities 'result in an appreciable increase in physical capacity, cognitive knowledge or more abstract ways of interpreting one's experience,' (Gordon et al) and include sight-seeing, physical exercise and sports, attendance at cultural events and learning a subject for its own sake. At the next level, creative activities, individuals engage in artistic productions or intellectural endeavors, participate in serious discussion and analysis, or contribute to some altruistic enterprise. The highest level, sensual transcendence, includes ecstatic religious and highly competitive (often physical) games, in addition to sexual activity.

Libraries can provide resources for most, if not all, of these activities. But two things are essential if libraries -- public, community college and college libraries principally -- are to be able to make the enormous contribution they can make to the self-actualization as well as to the healthy survival of older persons, especially women: they must be funded either through library appropriations or through set-asides from other progams for the elderly, and they must be explicitly mandated to participate with others in coordinated programs which provide services and mount programs for the elderly.

It would be difficult to think of a society that has ever needed its elders as much as this one. For that reason, if for no more benevolent one, we owe it to ourselves to do everything possible to empower them in mind and spirit, to sustain us.

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